

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6771

S E C R E T LAGOS 10549

NODIS

DEPARTMENT PASS DAR ES SALAAM FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S POSSIBLE VISIT TO NIGERIA

REF: STATE 224778

1. AS GARBA WAS UNAVAILABLE ACROSS THE WEEKEND AND TIED UP WITH NGUZA KAR-I-BOND YESTERDAY AND TODAY, I CALLED ON AMERICA DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR EDREMODA THIS MORNING TO RELAY REFTEL'S INSTRUCTION CONCERNING UNLIKELIHOOD THAT SECRETARY WOULD BE ABLE VISIT LAGOS DURING PRESENT AFRICAN TRIP.

2. EDREMODA BEAT ME TO THE PUNCH, LEADING OFF WITH A MESSAGE GARBA HAD ASKED HIM TO GIVE ME. GARBA WISHED TO APOLOGIZE FOR NOT SEEING ME PERSONALLY. THE KARL-I-BOND VISIT AND AN IMPENDING TRIP UP COUNTRY WITH HEAD OF STATE OBASANJO PRECLUDED HIS SEEING ME FOR SEVERAL DAYS. GARBA WANTED ME MEANWHILE TO INFORM THE SECRETARY THAT THE FMG APPRECIATED THE SECRETARY'S INTEREST IN A POSSIBLE VISIT TO NIGERIA IN CONNECTION WITH HIS CURRENT SOUTHERN AFRICAN INITIATIVE. THE FMG WAS FOLLOWING THIS INITIATIVE WITH GREAT INTEREST. UNFORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, THE TIMING OF A VISIT A WEEK OR MORE HENCE WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE CONVENIENT IN VIEW OF PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNGA AND GARBA'S DEPARTURE FOR NEW YORK SEPTEMBER 25. THE FMG CONTINUED TO HOPE THAT MUTUALLY CONVENIENT DATES COULD BE ARRANGED AT SOME OTHER TIME.

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3. EDREMODA SAID" THE COMMISSIONER AND OUR ENTIRE MINISTRY

DEEPLY REGRET HAVING TO GIVE YOU THIS KIND OF REPLY - WE HAD ALL VERY MUCH HOPED WE COULD WORK THIS OUT." I REPLIED THAT SECRETARY'S OWN TIGHT PROGRAM FOR THE UNGA, ALONG WITH UPCOMING SOUTHERN AFRICAN NEGOTIATIONS, PROBABLY RULED OUT THE VISIT ANYWAY.

4. COMMENT: FMG'S NEGATIVE RESPONSE IS IN SHARP CONTRAST WITH GARBA'S INITIAL REACTION TO THE IDEA AS REPORTED LAGOS 10234 ELEVEN DAYS AGO. IT IS SIMILARLY INCONSISTENT WITH OTHER SIGNALS WE'VE BEEN GETTING FROM MEA TO EFFECT THAT NIGERIANS HAVE FELT THEMSELVES ON SIDELINES OF CURRENT SOUTHERN AFRICAN SITUATION AND WISHED TO BE MORE DIRECTLY INVOLVED. FMG'D LONG DELAY IN RESPONDING PLUS NATURE OF GARBA'S REPLY THIS MORNING LEADS US TO CONCLUSION THAT GARBA AND OTHER "MODERATES" ON THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL WERE AGAIN OUTVOTED BY THOSE WHO FOUND A VISIT STILL TOO CONTROVERSIAL IN CONTINUING ZENOPHOBIC ENVIRONMENT AND DECIDED THEREFORE FOLLOW PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE. NO WAY OF KNOWING WHETHER MACBRIDE'S FOUL MOUTHING (LAGOS 10829) HAD SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON FMG DECISION. WE BELIEVE THAT AT LEAST GARBA DID WHAT HE COULD ON BEHALF OF VISIT PROPOSAL. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT SECRETARY/GARBA LUNCH IN WASHINGTON IN OCTOBER COULD PRODUCE USEFUL DIVIDENDS (SEE LAGOS 9946).  
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